



Less Stress Press

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Dedicated to hope and help since 1984

Minute

VOLUME I, January 2001

Happy New Year from the Midwest Center!

Lucinda Bassett



STOP OBSESSING

Hello Everyone!

Whew! Life has been a whirlwind for me lately. Kids back in school. Running everyone everywhere. Soccer, volleyball games, drum lessons, doctors appointments, play practice, school functions, work deadlines, responsibility.

What is amazing how sensitive I can still be. I know I'm a good mother, I know I'm a good wife, I know I'm a good business woman, but why do I still question myself? Am I doing it all well? Are the kids strong enough, independent enough, and grateful enough? Do I give my husband enough attention and praise? Am I spending enough time with my friends? Am I taking care of myself?

Yesterday after having a particularly difficult day, I walked into my daughter's room with the intention of positively communicating with the independent, strong willed, almost 15-year-old girl/woman. She played "hard to get through to." As I sat there on her bed, I could feel my frustration building. I spend most of my time with and on my kids. Even though I work, I am a full time

mom both at home, and at school, I am a weekend taxi service, I am there for my kids. Yet at that very moment I found myself wondering why she wasn't lovingly cuddling with me and telling me her secrets. And where was all this "attitude" coming from? I sat in that moment wondering, okay...obsessing, about what I might not be doing right with her...and everyone else in my life. I was tired. I was vulnerable. Suddenly I recognized a song that was playing in the background on Brittany's CD player. It was an old song that I used to love by The Who. Could it be we still shared one common interest? The lyrics of the song go like this...

"Don't surround yourself with yourself, move back to square. Send that instant Karma to me...initial it with loving care...yourself." As I sat there listening to that old song I thought about the words and how they could apply to this moment.

"Don't surround yourself with yourself." We do that when we surround ourselves with obsessive thoughts. We surround ourselves with ourselves until we want to just scream. We get into an obsessive mode about everything from health concerns, to fearful thoughts about the future, to whether or not we are good parents. We make ourselves sick. Don't do it! Let go of the thoughts. Don't take everything so seriously.

"Move on back to square..." Go back to reality. What is really going on in the moment? What really matters? Break your state of obsession. Does it really matter that my daughter has an attitude? Isn't that normal for her age? Could I not take it personally and just 'be there' with her in the moment?

"The Midwest Center is committed to providing the individual with cost and time efficient cognitive behavioral based solutions - solutions that foster strength, character and self-empowerment."

DON'T PANIC!

- Accept the feeling, it can't hurt you.
- Give yourself permission to feel anxious.
- Don't over-breathe. Breathe slowly through your nose.
- Calm yourself with positive self-talk.
- Let go. Just float and flow.
- Distract yourself, it is only anxiety.
- Use the adrenalin in a positive pursuit.
- Don't let a bad day scare you.
- Let time pass. IT WILL GO AWAY.

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Lucinda continues...

“Send that instant Karma to me, initial it with loving care...” Put out positive energy instead of draining depressing worry and fear. People don't like being around someone who is constantly negative, worn out, and irritated. Put out what you want back.

“To yourself...” Send this energy to yourself! Let go of yourself. Let go of your thoughts. Get involved in life. Be kind to yourself. Be loving to others and especially yourself.

As I sat there with Brittany, I relaxed my body, told myself not to take anything personally and let our conversation unfold. I stayed in the moment, noticing the warm tones of her beautiful skin, and the way her soft, golden brown hair fell around her shoulders. As I watched her talk about her day I noticed that she used the body language of a confident, strong young woman. This was my daughter. Yes, she is growing up but she doesn't have to grow away. No, I am not a perfect mother and she is not a perfect daughter and that's okay. I reached over and wrapped her in my arms. I smelled her hair the way I used to when she was a little girl. Almost to my surprise she relaxed in my arms and let herself be cuddled. She even cuddled me back. My obsessive self-examination stopped. All was good with the world. What a precious moment.

I'm sure I totally misinterpreted the lyrics to this wonderful old song, but it sure worked for me for the rest of the day. I just kept singing...

“Don't surround yourself with yourself
Move on back to square.
Send that instant Karma to me,
Initial it with loving care...yourself.”

Obsessive worrying is such a problem for people with anxiety and yet it is a subconscious choice we make. We can choose to break the state. We can choose to be less affected. The next time you get caught up with worry, try these lyrics and see if they work for you.

Till next time,

Lucinda

We Get Letters...

“Dear Lucinda, I am a thirty-one year old mother with two daughters and want to thank you for returning me to my family as a mother, wife, and friend. I have been suffering from anxiety for the past five years. I am almost finished going through your program and I have realized that I have suffered from this disorder since childhood...”

My husband has been extremely supportive and understanding. Two years ago a death of a close family member forced me to return to Germany.... on the advice of my psychiatrist I took as much medication as I needed to make it over there. Needless to say, once I arrived I was a complete mess and called my husband. This wonderful man managed to make flight arrangements, pack, take off work, and arrive at my side within twenty-four hours having two children in his tow. Needless to say, his love has always been unconditional.

In March of this year (1999) I finally had enough of it all. My anxiety had cost me to miss out on many opportunities and lead to quit a very secure and profitable employment. I knew something had to change; I HAD TO CHANGE. I vowed to find a support group and I did. The group's leader, who has been recovered for years, made me aware of your wonderful program. I also vowed to get a complete physical, which confronted me with a major challenge: a 3 cm hole in my heart, which had to be taken care of preferably soon!

Confronted with open-heart surgery, I started your program immediately and I also discovered a spirituality in me I had ignored for a very long time. I was scared. My family was scared. And I listened to you: I LET GO AND LET GOD! I made it through the surgery my recovery went very well. I am now on tape 14 of your program and I AM CHANGING!!!! I haven't had a panic attack in months and I am able to handle anxiety with the skills taught in your program. I AM NOT SCARED ANYMORE!!

Yesterday, my daughters and I went to the movies (without my husband, who I always believed to be my “safe person”) and had a ball watching the new Disney movie Tarzan. We

ran errands and I actually sat down with my younger daughter and played blocks with her in the afternoon, even though my house needed cleaning. When I went to bed last night I was exhausted not because of anxiety but because of all the fun we had. I felt so proud of myself I just had to write.



I used to be the poster-child for the “most likely to suffer from anxiety disorder,” I was an over achiever, perfectionist, control freak, know-it-all, and over reactor. Now my attitude is changing. I take my time; I take care of myself (exercise, nutrition, and relaxation); I am living in the precious moment. I am done rushing and worrying my life away; I

truly believe that whatever happens, happens for a reason. I am back in school now finishing a bachelor's degree I had started many years ago...Sincerely,

Anja Chancellor